

EVEN AT A BANQUET FIGHTING SPIRIT OF WOMEN WORKERS IS CONTAGIOUS

BY JANE WHITAKER

What the bugle call is to the soldier, the smell of powder to the war horse—even the red rag to the bull—a meeting of working women is to me. I never attend such a meeting and listen to the unqualified challenge of working women to the powerful forces of big business that I do not want to fight, however peaceful I may have felt when I started to the meeting.

Therefore my feeling after I had attended the dinner given in honor of Mrs. Raymond Robins, national president of the Women's Trade Union league, and other national representatives Saturday night was no exception to the rule. But I did have to smile as I found myself looking speculatively at my typewriter when I reached my home at 11:30 at night with the idea of writing a call to working women to awaken to the necessity of unionism that they might take advantage of the sublime courage, the marvelous strategic manipulation and the admirable contempt for the forces that oppose them of the women who are leaders in the Women's Trade Union league. What I would have accomplished had I started writing a story at that hour of the night would have been a protest from indignant mortals disturbed in their slumber.

A woman so small she could be tucked under one's arm, yet so big in courage and mentality that she is feared by big interests the moment she champions a cause, states in a very matter of fact way that it is necessary to add at least a thousand new members to the league in the next year, so that when the league sends its delegates to the legislature or the city council those bodies may realize the power behind the delegates. She very simply outlines how such a campaign may be conducted successfully. The league has decided

to do it, therefore it will be done. And Agnes Nestor, president of the Chicago Women's Trade Union league, never speaks thoughtlessly, which was probably one of the reasons she was put on a national commission by the president of the United States.

With a laugh and a jest, a woman even smaller than Agnes Nestor rises to speak. She is so small that women in the rear of the room ask her to stand on a table. Melinda Scott, however, is one of the best known women labor leaders in the country. She is a hat trimmer by trade and president of the New York league, as well as vice president of the national organization.

She excoriates welfare work given the workers to blind them to the need of organization. She tells of girls who work 12 hours on the night shift at Perth Amboy, New Jersey, for less than \$8 a week. She mentions the lost struggle for women's votes in the east as she says, with a smile, that women are not considered fit to make their own laws, but—still with a smile—she adds that they will again have an opportunity of talking suffrage and trades unionism on the street corners of New York city and New Jersey, where for two months last autumn 100 meetings a night were held.

Recently Gov. Whitman of New York appointed Miss Scott a member of the state industrial council—the only woman serving in this capacity.

Miss Mabel Gillespie, secretary of the Boston league and a member of the Massachusetts minimum wage commission, speaks drolly, but with telling effect.

Massachusetts has the minimum wage commission. It is a good thing, says Miss Gillespie. Then, in a few terse sentences, she tells why.

It is good because the findings of the commission have been spread